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Focus-Mahathir-Mandate

BN NEEDS FRESH MANDATE TO COMPLETE UNFINISHED TASKS

By: Ali Mamat

KUALA LUMPUR: When Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad urges the rakyat to continue to give the Barisan Nasional a fresh mandate during the Nov. 29 snap election, it is not a question of keeping him in his post or seat.

Instead, it is a question of continuity in the unfinished struggle concerning the survival of the race, religion and nation.

"Any move to hinder the BN from continuing with its unfinished struggle can frustrate all the past and present development efforts and future plans to make Malaysia a developed nation by the year 2020.

"It would also directly lower the dignity of the race and religion, destroy the culture and values of the people and expose the nation to all new forms of colonialism by foreign powers," said Dr Mahathir.

He said if self-interest was his main motive, it would not make sense for him to think and plan development projects for the next 100 years.

"If I were to think of my self-interest, then what is the point of my planning to build the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang to meet the needs of the country for the next 100 years?

"All this is for the benefits of future generations because many of us today might not enjoy the full benefits of these long-term projects," he said.

Don't Gamble With Your Future

It is in this context that Dr Mahathir does not want the rakyat to gamble their future by choosing a new government other than the BN in this election.

The present opposition parties not only lack visions but their leaders do not have ideas for the good of the nation, especially in times of crisis, when compared with the BN.

This can be seen from the attitude of the opposition leaders when the regional financial crisis hit Malaysia recently. They criticised every move and measure taken by the government but refused to sit in public-private sector think tank, the National Economic Consultative Council, to contribute together their ideas on how to get the nation out of the crisis.

Instead, by pooling their ideas together, the BN leaders succeeded in devising various strategies to overcome the economic crisis and speed the nation on the road to recovery.

Visions and Courage Needed

Dr Mahathir said while other nations in the region had to bow to the wishes of international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the BN government was brave enough to introduce various measures and strategies suited to the needs of the nation. These included selective capital control to stop the ringgit from being manipulated by currency speculators.

"This action proves successful in stabilising the ringgit when compared with other currencies," he said.

The fresh ideas of the BN leaders also succeeded in overcoming weaknesses in several economic sectors brought about by the financial crisis, like construction and manufacturing.

"We launched the house-buying campaign when the developers faced difficulties in selling their houses or buildings. We also encouraged car sale carnivals throughout the country when motor manufacturers and

distributors could not find customers," said the prime minister.

He said they were able to come out with these constructive ideas because under the BN power-sharing setup, the leaders sit around the table to discuss and exchange ideas with a common aim, that is, to do the best for the good of the rakyat and nation.

"When the cabinet papers are no longer classified as 'secret' one day, the people will be able to see how the first two hours of every cabinet meeting are utilised by the leaders of the BN component parties to discuss and exchange ideas so that new ideas can emerge to benefit the people and nation.

"Only then would the cabinet attend to the cabinet papers and other national administrative matters," he said.

Projects For the Benefits of The People

Dr Mahathir is not unaware that certain projects are not popular with some segments of the rakyat, like the KLIA, the new administrative centre Putrajaya and the Formula One race circuit in Sepang.

"Nevertheless we had to proceed with these projects because we are fully convinced that these projects will bring a lot of benefits to the people and nation one day," he said.

In fact, he said, the speed in which Putrajaya was built and its sophistication in various aspects is suitable to its role as the government's administrative centre and as an alternative city to Kuala Lumpur.

Now, Putrajaya has become the pride of all the people because Bangkok and Tokyo have yet to find a solution to their high density and crowded conditions.

The vision anchored on the interests of the people and nation also convinced the BN government to build the Formula One circuit because it can fuel the interest of foreigners and induce them to know Malaysia better and to make Malaysia a place for their capital investment.

All these are only a portion of the many manifestations of the constructive ideas of the BN leaders, he said, adding that the rakyat could see more if they would stop the opposition parties from denying the BN its two-thirds majority in this general election.

Solid Government For Progress

Dr Mahathir said the new government must stand on solid ground so that they could intensify the development agenda when the nation steps into the new millennium, especially in the modernisation of the agriculture sector.

"We are confident that the agriculture sector has huge potential and can free the nation from its over-dependence on food imports, while raising the standard of living of the people, particularly the small farmers," said the prime minister.

Dr Mahathir and the other BN leaders had succeeded in making Malaysia a respected nation, and the rakyat as a people with high values and culture.

All these will come to naught, if the BN is stopped from completing its unfinished struggle. -- Bernama

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